



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 24th INFANTRY DIVISION (MECH) and FORT RILEY
FORT RILEY, KANSAS 66442-5000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AFZN-GA-AS

4 Feb 2005

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Fort Riley Retiree Council

Call to Order: A meeting of the Fort Riley Retiree Council was called to order by the out-going chairperson, MSG (Ret) Michael L. Heronemus, USA, at 1330 hours on 4 Feb 2005. He introduced the newly elected vice-chairperson, CSM (Ret) Leland Robinson, USA, who then presided over the meeting in BG (Ret) Dayle Williamson's absence.

Invocation: SGM (Ret) Joseph A. Gilmore, USA, offered the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance: CSM Robinson led council members in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Minutes: The minutes of the council's meeting on 4 Dec 2004 were approved.

Committee Reports:

Membership Committee –

- a. Mrs. Mary Sue Moore was nominated to fill the widow's position on the council. Mrs. Moore introduced herself stating that her husband had been the Irwin Army Community Hospital commander from 1985 – 1988. She has four children and currently works at Kansas State University. She was unanimously approved to serve on the council. All members of the council introduced themselves to Mrs. Moore. "Welcome!"
- b. Tribute to LTC (Ret) Carol E. Beggs – BG (Ret) Dayle Williamson, USA, composed a fitting tribute to LTC Carol E. Beggs. The council unanimously approved to send this tribute to LTC Beggs' widow, Mrs. Betty Beggs. Kathy Cunningham-Tucker, RSO, thanked all council members who remembered to bring in news articles and funeral programs about LTC Beggs. These items are important to both remember this great patriot, and to preserve this as record for our historical files.

Legislative Committee –

- a. CSM Robinson noted that there is some good information coming out with your W2 about how to check your military record.
- b. MAJ (Ret) Max McAllister, USA, gave an update concerning National Association for Uniformed Services. NAUS is in transition with the retirement of MajGen (Ret) Richard D. Murray, USAF, and the newly appointed president, MG (Ret) William M. Matz, Jr., USA. NAUS gave crucial support for TRICARE in 2004, and has since focused attention on widows benefits. We believe that a great job has been done on both these points, and that NAUS can be credited with huge gains for all servicemembers under MajGen Murray's leadership.
- c. Kathy Cunningham-Tucker brought attention to three handouts that BG Williamson had sent from Sen. Ben Nelson's office. The first document was a copy of the letter addressed to President George W. Bush, dated 26 Jan 2005, and signed by members of Congress regarding the reductions in funding for Medicare, Medicaid, and medical care for veterans within the FY 2006

budget. The second document outlined Senate Bill 11 Standing With Our Troops, which addresses (1) the increase of Army and Marine Corps end strength, (2) provide the very best equipment to the National Guard and Reserves prior to deployment, (3) provide for access to health care for all reservists and their families by 2006. This bill is extensive and includes several other points of interest. The third document outlined Senate Bill 42 Honoring Our Fallen Soldiers and Families Act of 2005 which would increase the death gratuity from \$12,000 to \$100,000 effective 1 Oct 2001.

Discussion:

- a. CSM Robinson noted that with the passing of LTC Beggs, there is a vacancy for an officer on the council. If any council members know of anyone who might be interested, be sure to submit their names. SFC (Ret) Randy Merson, USA, suggested that CW3 (Ret) Bobby L. Whitten, USA, might be interested. Kathy noted that he is not well but that his name could be considered. MSG Heronemus noted that perhaps the new post AG, LTC (Ret) Kenneth Steggeman, USA, might be interested. Both names may be considered by the Membership Committee.
- b. CSM Robinson noted that there are several members whose term of service is about to expire. Each individual was asked if they wished to remain. The following members accepted another term of service: LTC (Ret) Jack Hoagland, USA, CSM (Ret) Juventino Rodriguez, USA, MSG (Ret) Gus Catalan, USA, MAJ (Ret) Max McAllister, USA, SFC (Ret) Randy Merson, USA. LTC (Ret) Stanley Sutton, USA, agreed to remain until July 2006 but anticipates moving to Colorado after that. BG (Ret) Thomas Kennedy, USA, and MAJ (Ret) Kenneth Edmiston, USA, were not present.

RSO Remarks:

Kathy noted that with the redeployments from Iraq there is a higher rate of retiring soldiers. Although the workload has increased the funding for paid overtime has now stopped. HRC's policy change regarding approval authority was not staffed properly and resulted in delayed retirement approvals, frequent resubmissions of retirement requests, and the inability to track the status/progress of retirement requests. Improvements have been made to streamline the process, most notably, the workload distribution has been changed from alphabetically to a single clerk assigned to process all Fort Riley applications. The redeployment of 1st Bde created a surge of 54 soldiers retiring between January and March '05. Monthly retirement ceremonies will become mandatory effective March 2005. This will also increase the RSO workload. Prior to March, the voluntary attendance averaged 8 – 11 soldiers per month. The mandatory requirement will increase this to 20 – 35 soldiers per month. Due to the G1 awards section having such a difficult time getting the units to cooperate in submitting awards in a timely manner the RSO will now have to project attendance three months out. This new policy has tripled the RSO's workload regarding ceremonies.

Old Business:

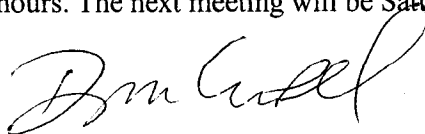
- a. SSG (Ret) Carroll Everist, USA, inquired whether or not the DD 214 privacy law had been passed. CSM Robinson commented that it had. Court clerks will log in the record and it will follow a certain official protocol to ensure the law is met.

b. MSG Heronemus commented on the progression of the new cemetery, which will be at the edge of the reservation and near the Manhattan airport. There is a two-year timeline for this project. There is a high likelihood that the current cemetery spaces will be exhausted before the completion of the new cemetery. However, progress is being made.

New Business:

- a. CSM Rodriguez asked about the status of the job protection law for Reservists/Guardsmen called up for duty. CSM Robinson noted that there is a committee at the state level working on it, and the governor also is working on this important issue. He said he would try to have an update for the next meeting.
- b. LTC (Ret) Diana M. Chapel, USA, noted that there would be a mobile DAV field office in the area. Dates and places are as follows:
Feb 14, 2005 – VFW post, Junction City, KS.
Feb 15, 2005 – Army Reserve Center, Emporia, KS
Feb 16, 2005 – VFW post, Overland Park, KS
Feb 17, 2005 – White Side parking lot, Fort Scott, KS
Feb 18, 2005 – Community Based Outpatient Clinic, Parsons, KS
The hours each day are from 0900 – 1700.
- c. SGM Gilmore asked if the council was going to continue to meet on Fridays. Kathy stated that with all the additional requirements in her office, it impacted her work greatly. It was unanimously decided to return to Saturday meetings. Our next meeting will therefore be held Saturday, April 16, 2005.
- d. SSG Everist noted that the VA is issuing new identification cards, so be on the lookout. Some problems with the computers to issue the cards have resulted in some delays.
- e. A draft of this year's Retiree Newsletter will be presented at the next council meeting. If anyone has any input/articles to submit please give them to Kathy. Her email is kathy.cunningham1@us.army.mil. We also need to review our committee assignments at our next meeting.

Adjournment: There being no further old or new business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 1433 hours. The next meeting will be Saturday, April 16, 2005, at 1030 hours.



DIANA M. CHAPEL
LTC (Ret), USA, Recorder



LELAND ROBINSON
CSM, (Ret), USA, Vice-Chairperson



KATHY CUNNINGHAM-TUCKER
DAC, Retirement Services Officer